



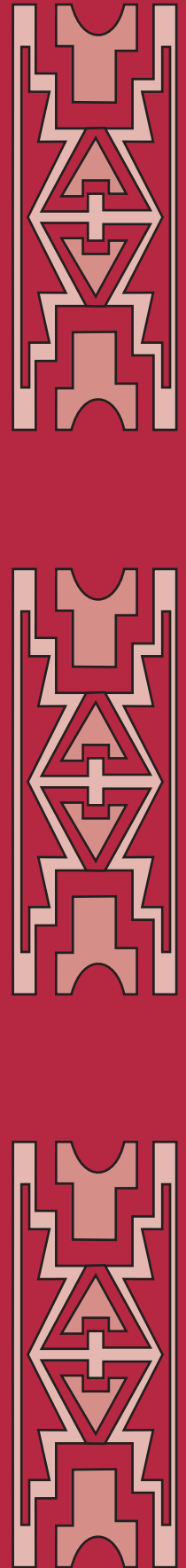
The POLICY Project

HIV/AIDS TOOLKIT

BUILDING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AT SUBNATIONAL LEVELS

AUGUST 2000

The POLICY Project is a five-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Contract No. CCP-C-00-95-0023-04 beginning September 1, 1995. It is implemented by The Futures Group International in collaboration with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA).



Building Political Commitment for Effective HIV/AIDS Policies and Programs

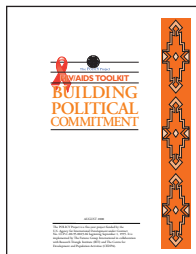
TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) recently released its *Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic, June 2000*, a state-of-the-art commentary on the status of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world. The statistics for sub-Saharan Africa remain grim. At the end of 1999, 34.3 million people were HIV-infected throughout the world, 24.5 million of whom were sub-Saharan Africans. About 5.4 million persons became newly infected in 1999, more than 4 million of whom were sub-Saharan Africans. The large majority of the 1.3 million children who are infected are African children.

But the UNAIDS report offered hope as well. It noted that enough world experience exists to know that it is possible to mount an effective national response to limit the spread of HIV and mitigate the effects of the epidemic. While cautioning that no universal blueprint exists, the report drew on some of the common features of effective national responses. Political will and leadership were first on the list. "Effective responses are characterized by political commitment from community leadership up to a country's highest political level," UNAIDS declared.

What is political commitment and why is it so important? Is it possible to take conscious actions to build political commitment as a key step in combating HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa? Are there blueprints or approaches that have proven to be effective? The toolkit considers these questions and offers some discussion and guidelines for activists determined to increase political commitment for effective HIV/AIDS policies and programs. Although this toolkit focuses on sub-Saharan Africa, many of the principles and approaches discussed also will be relevant to other regions of the world.

The Main Components of the Toolkit



Building Political Commitment

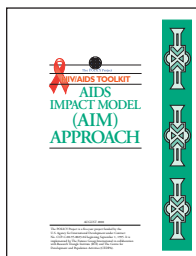
This component is the introduction to the toolkit. It discusses the nature of political commitment and why it is so important to efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It offers a set of questions to assist potential toolkit users in getting a quick idea whether political commitment issues are of importance in their own country.

Building political commitment for an effective national response to HIV/AIDS is as much an art as a science. This toolkit is intended to be expanded and updated as required based on feedback from users - so comments and suggestions are welcome.



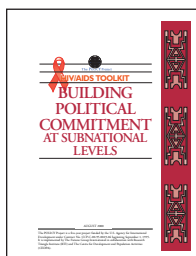
Measuring Political Commitment

One of the important values of this toolkit is that it describes ways to measure political commitment through both individual and comprehensive indicators. By using these kinds of measurement tools over time, it is possible to get a sense of whether the level of political commitment to effective HIV/AIDS responses is changing over time.



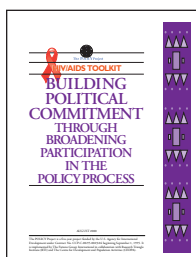
The AIDS Impact Model (AIM) Approach

The AIM approach has been one of the effective tools used to build political commitment in a number of sub-Saharan countries in recent years. This component includes discussion of the AIM approach with a step-by-step description of an AIM application. It gives examples of country use and tells how to obtain the AIM computer model and sample AIM books.



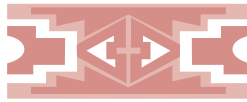
Building Political Commitment at Subnational Levels

Many countries in the region have or are in the process of decentralizing many government functions. In these countries, it is critically important that districts develop and implement strong HIV/AIDS programs. This component discusses approaches that can be used to develop political commitment at the district level.



Building Political Commitment Through Broadening Participation in the Policy Process

The more that interested actors from the government, the private sector, civil society, and the communities can be engaged in policy dialogue, planning, and evaluation, the greater the chances for an effective response to the epidemic. This component describes different approaches for enhancing the participation of all sectors.



Building Political Commitment at Subnational Levels

INTRODUCTION

In order to reach populations at risk, HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation interventions must be delivered at individual, family, community, and district levels. The nature of the epidemic requires that interventions be delivered by a wide variety of institutions, organizations, and community groups. Many of these churches, clubs, businesses, and civic organizations have members who are impacted by HIV and AIDS, and they want to help. However, many of them do not have resources or technical expertise to deliver the types of programs that now need to be developed. If new and expanded programs for HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation are to be established, it will require the strong support and backing of leaders and constituencies at subnational levels. This component of the HIV/AIDS toolkit provides guidance on how to build political support for programs at subnational levels. This "tool" consists of a set of mutually reinforcing methods and activities that are aimed at the goals of increased awareness, knowledge, motivation, capacity, and action-taking by leaders at subnational levels.



Local Political Commitment

The magnitude of the AIDS epidemic in Africa means that most countries face an enormous challenge: the need to mobilize the social consciousness, political will, technical expertise, and resources to build a whole new infrastructure of services and service providers at national and subnational levels. Many countries are seeking a means of mobilizing the skill, commitment, and resources of governmental, nongovernmental, religious, community-based, and private sector organizations to deliver services to their members and to a variety of target groups. Local organizations of all kinds must come to realize that they can and must play a role in the fight against AIDS. This component—Building Political Commitment at Subnational Levels—combines a variety of approaches and techniques to educate and mobilize leaders to play an active role in the creation and maintenance of programs at local levels.

Faced with the need to elicit a broad-based, multisectoral response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, governments need to involve leaders at subnational levels to spearhead the creation of service delivery programs. Government decentralization and support for capacity building are seen as a means of supporting the activities of large numbers of semi-autonomous projects. Motivated and skilled leadership at the local level will be key to success. Deliberate strategies and activities are needed to mobilize these leaders and involve them in HIV/AIDS activities.

Building this political commitment and leadership at the local level

is done through a variety of methods. It requires awareness raising to educate leaders and place HIV/AIDS on their personal political agendas. This is done in part through the use of AIDS Impact Modeling (AIM) and dissemination activities. It requires advocacy efforts to increase resources and put supportive policies in place. It requires strategic planning at both national and local levels to assess needs, identify priorities, select strategies, allocate responsibilities, and develop implementation plans. It requires the creation of networks and coalitions of HIV/AIDS organizations that can serve as focal points for information sharing, policy development, and capacity building. And it requires a variety of capacity-building activities to help local organizations develop and acquire the resources and tools they need for service delivery.

Each of these methods is described briefly in this component. The methods need to be combined into a coherent and strategic approach to building political support. These efforts normally will be articulated with the government's decentralization goals, with donor support to local organizations, with National AIDS Control Program (NACP) policies on governance and decision making, with the activities of key government ministries, with the involvement of the major HIV/AIDS programs in the country, and with a variety of capacity-building activities.



Political Commitment at Subnational Levels: How Is Local Political Support Built?

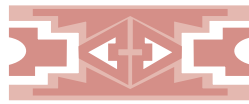
The objective of this component is to build political support for HIV/AIDS programs at provincial, district, and community levels. This means that leaders and their constituencies will become aware of the impact of AIDS in their communities; will understand the key interventions needed to reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS; will speak openly about AIDS; and will take action at their level to plan, find resources for, and assure the implementation of service delivery programs.

It is important to distinguish between goals and objectives that build political support for HIV/AIDS programs from other, but related, goals and objectives of project planning and implementation. The table below demonstrates

an example of the range of objectives that might be used at subnational levels.

The objectives related to building political support are primarily those on the left of the table whereas those related to project planning and implementation are on the right of the table. Any comprehensive attempt to promote the decentralized delivery of HIV/AIDS interventions by organizations at local levels will be concerned with all of the objectives listed in the table below. Ideally, there will be an integrated effort to both build political support and develop the capacity of organizations to deliver services. However, this component is concerned primarily with the objectives on the left of the table, which are aimed at developing political support.

Building Political Support	Project Planning, Management, and Implementation
Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and its impact	Create a strategic plan
Educate about interventions and the roles of service delivery organizations	Increase participation
Advocate for change in programs, policies, and funding	Plan the project
Target AIM dissemination activities at leaders and interest groups	Mobilize resources
Build networks and coalitions	Build organizational capacity and develop staff
Create a strategic plan	Manage and control finances
Increase participation	Monitor performance
Plan the project	Evaluate and report



Activities and Interventions that Build Local Support

As noted previously, this component consists of a set of mutually reinforcing interventions and activities that are used collectively to build political support for HIV/AIDS programs at subnational levels. The specific methods used and the way they are combined will vary from one country to the next. This will depend on the objectives of the support-building effort, the leaders and groups targeted, the funding available, the strategies employed, and the stakeholder groups involved in program implementation. These efforts to educate, motivate, and involve leaders at subnational levels normally will be linked to similar efforts aimed at national audiences and to other efforts aimed at capacity building so that local organizations acquire the plans, resources, and skills to deliver actual services.

The mix of political support-building interventions used will include some or all of the following:

- AIM activities intended to raise awareness and place HIV/AIDS on the political agenda
- Advocacy activities to mobilize leaders and groups to take action
- Strategic planning activities to work out the missions, goals, objectives, and strategies of organizations becoming active in HIV/AIDS work
- Network- and coalition-building activities to create supportive linkages among service organizations

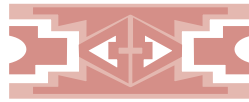
- Capacity-building interventions aimed at strengthening the technical and managerial capacity of service providers

Each of these interventions or activities is briefly described in the following section. Some of them—such as AIM and the use of participation and advocacy—are the subject of other components in this toolkit and should be referred to for more detailed coverage.

The AIDS Impact Modeling (AIM) Approach

The AIM computer model and its associated dissemination activities are designed to analyze the HIV/AIDS situation in a country, produce accurate information about the likely course and impact of the epidemic, package that information in an attractive media presentation, and reach out to leaders at all levels of society to build their support for prevention and mitigation programs. Its goals are to develop a broad political consensus that HIV/AIDS programs are necessary to the well-being of society and to create a supportive environment for those programs.

The AIM computer model uses demographic, sentinel surveillance, and other data to project the future number of HIV infections, AIDS cases, and AIDS deaths, given an assumption about adult HIV prevalence. The program also projects the demographic, economic, and social impacts of the epidemic. The analysis of the current situation and the projections of the future course of the epidemic are used to make an attractive multimedia AIM presentation that is targeted at leaders and



influential citizens. The presentation enhances knowledge of HIV and AIDS, describes the proven interventions used in prevention and mitigation programs, provides a forum for discussion, and mobilizes committed leaders to take action.

AIM activities can be used to build understanding and support of leaders at both national and subnational levels. AIM dissemination programs have been developed and implemented in many countries, with key target audiences that include political leaders, civil servants, nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and other leaders at provincial, district, and local levels. AIM activities help create a supportive environment for HIV/AIDS programs, increase funding levels, and promote the personal involvement of leaders to ensure that programs are established, supported, and working.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a set of specific actions in support of a cause. Its goal is to change the behavior of politicians, policymakers, or decision makers who have the authority to establish programs, make policies, and allocate resources. Advocacy campaigns are designed to influence decision makers directly through information and argument or indirectly through the mobilization of a groundswell of support for HIV/AIDS programs. Advocacy campaigns are organized, disciplined, well-researched, persistent, targeted attempts to induce politicians and their constituencies to take specified actions or decisions. Effective advocacy campaigns are characterized by the formation of networks and coalitions, careful setting of goals and measurable objectives, thorough research of the issues, concise message development, analysis of the opposition, effective use of the media, identification of political opportunities, and use of passion and persuasion to achieve clearly defined objectives.

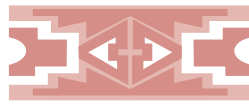
Advocacy differs from the AIM activities described previously. AIM uses a computer model to analyze sentinel surveillance data and project the likely future course of the epidemic. Output from the model is used to create presentations designed to raise awareness and build support for HIV/AIDS programs. Advocacy campaigns also use the AIM materials and presentations to build generalized support. Advocacy efforts, however, are focused more narrowly on specific decisions or actions that need to be taken by clearly identified groups or individuals. Advocacy efforts are usually aimed at the change or adoption of a specific policy, such as the adoption

of nondiscriminatory policies toward HIV-infected individuals, or the allocation of increased levels of funding for specified programs.

Advocacy is both a skill and an art. The skills can be mastered through a step-by-step training approach, such as the one developed by the POLICY Project. A workshop design and training manual called "Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual" is available free from the POLICY Project (see the Internet Resources and Contact sections at the end of this component).

Strategic Planning

The decentralization and proliferation of needed HIV/AIDS programs at subnational levels presents many challenges. National governments and their NACPs need to create the framework, policies, guidelines, and capacity-building services to help organizations at lower levels get started and acquire the skills and resources needed to begin operation. Provincial, district, NGO, church, and other community-based programs often need support for planning, training, resource sharing, and problem solving. And individual service delivery organizations have to develop their own internal capacities. Strategic planning is a key intervention that helps these organizations to plan, develop strategies, increase technical capacity, mobilize resources, and deliver services on a sustainable basis.



Strategic planning workshops have been used at provincial and district levels to mobilize AIDS committees, assess needs, prioritize needed services, develop proposals for funding, and coordinate the work of member organizations. Technical assistance in strategic planning, priority setting, grant writing, financial management, and technical skill-building are typically coupled with AIM dissemination and advocacy efforts to build a critical mass of interest and expertise at subnational levels. Existing organizations are strengthened, new or re-energized groups emerge, coalitions are built, and systems are put in place to support a new cluster of semi-autonomous and active HIV/AIDS service programs.

Network and Coalition Building

A complementary set of activities involves the creation of networks and coalitions to promote the response to HIV/AIDS. Networks are everywhere, whether formal or informal, and are used for a variety of purposes. Professional networks are used to share information, look for a job, or promote a new product or service. Informal friendship networks are used for recreation, voluntary work, and social activities. Similar networks among HIV/AIDS organizations and interested supporters are an important way to support and sustain work in HIV prevention and mitigation—work that can be difficult and stressful. Networks are invaluable in

helping organizations and individuals share ownership of common goals, support one another's efforts, share information, and undertake joint activities, such as advocacy and information dissemination campaigns. Formal networks, such as an alliance of AIDS organizations, can provide a platform for dialogue, policy development, problem identification, advocacy, sharing lessons learned, and mobilizing resources. Less formal networks of HIV/AIDS workers can become extremely useful tools for information sharing, personal support, and skill development.

The development of networks, coalitions, and alliances can, and should be, a deliberate component of building support at subnational levels. We are unfortunately in a situation where HIV and AIDS are likely to affect our societies for decades to come. In trying to build an infrastructure that will allow us to respond to the crisis, networks of organizations and their members can become useful in promoting and sustaining the response.

Capacity Building

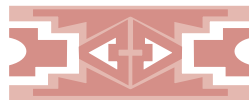
The development of political support for HIV/AIDS programs at subnational levels necessarily will involve a range of capacity-building activities. If leaders and their constituencies are asked to develop these programs, they are much more likely to do so if they can expect to receive support and technical assistance. NACPs and their donor partners will need to provide, or assure the provision of, many of the forms of assistance discussed in this toolkit—awareness raising, education, advocacy, technical training, assistance with strategic and operational planning, materials and commodities, access to competi-

tive grants, and other forms of support.

Capacity-building services are ideally combined with AIM activities, advocacy, strategic planning, and network development into a coherent package of services that together will support the emergence of a multiplicity of HIV/AIDS projects at subnational levels. The POLICY Project, often in collaboration with other organizations, has developed successful approaches to building political support for these programs.

Conclusion

In this toolkit component, several approaches and techniques intended to educate and mobilize leaders in an effort to create HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation programs at the provincial, district, and community levels have been described. These activities and interventions are mutually reinforcing; therefore, a combination of them can be used to accommodate a country's specific needs and resources. Indeed, many countries already have been addressing AIDS at subnational as well as national levels with varying institutional arrangements. For a practical example, see the Zambia case study on the next page.



CASE STUDY Zambia

Intensive efforts are under way in Zambia to build political support for HIV/AIDS programs at subnational levels. This has been part of a coordinated effort to develop simultaneously the capacity of District Task Forces (DTFs) to plan, coordinate, and support the efforts of local NGOs, religious groups, and community-based organizations to expand service delivery projects. These efforts are sanctioned by the National HIV/AIDS, STD, TB and Leprosy Program (NASTLP) and are implemented jointly by Project Concern International (PCI) and the POLICY Project with funding from USAID. PCI has an in-country project office and staff providing technical assistance at national and district levels whereas POLICY provides short-term technical assistance in the areas of AIM analysis and dissemination and strategic planning at national and district levels.

The objective of these activities was to mobilize an inter-sectoral response to the HIV/AIDS crisis and, more specifically, to build the capacity of DTFs to manage HIV/AIDS programs and achieve sustainable increases in service delivery. They wanted to test whether the DTFs could be an effective mechanism for operationalizing a multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS at the local level. Initial activities focused on four districts—Ndola, Nchelenge, Livingstone, and Kitwe—representing three important geographic regions of the country. The objective of the political support and capacity-building components were to

- ▶ Increase awareness, knowledge, and motivation to address the problems

- ▶ Develop an understanding of the key interventions needed to slow the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of AIDS
- ▶ Improve the social and policy environment for HIV/AIDS programs
- ▶ Build motivation and commitment to take action at the local level
- ▶ Develop DTFs as a model for sustainable inter-sectoral collaboration
- ▶ Develop the management technical capacity of DTFs and their member organizations
- ▶ Develop the technical skills and protocols to deliver specific interventions
- ▶ Ultimately, increase the delivery of services to communities

The Zambian experience in developing DTFs for HIV/AIDS programming offers important lessons. It is unrealistic to expect that a diverse group of organizations representing government, NGOs, religious institutions, and community-based organizations will merge easily into an effective programming body at the district level without significant investments of time, resources, and technical assistance. It was learned that opportunities are needed

- ▶ For organizations to learn about one another's programs
- ▶ To assess shared concerns
- ▶ To identify opportunities and negotiate roles for collective action
- ▶ To establish joint leadership and rules for interaction
- ▶ To agree on priorities and a strategic approach
- ▶ To develop management and technical capacities

When adequate time and energy were devoted to the development of DTFs, they emerged as effective planning and coordinating bodies. The districts developed comprehensive, inter-sectoral HIV/AIDS District Strategic Plans (1999 to 2003) and are supporting the coordinated activities of member organizations. DTFs are emerging as a central point for assessing the local HIV/AIDS situation, identifying program needs, selecting strategies and interventions, negotiating roles and activities to be undertaken by member groups, soliciting for funding, developing technical skills, and providing monitoring and evaluation services.

An overarching set of activities that supports the emergence and sustainability of DTFs is the development of broad political support among leaders at all levels. For this reason, PCI and the POLICY Project joined forces to implement AIM dissemination activities at regional and district levels, produce materials and presentations targeted at a cross-section of leaders, promote advocacy activities, provide training in strategic planning, and support the NASTLP in developing policies that support district-level activities. These activities were integrated tightly into the technical assistance aimed at capacity building. It is anticipated that continuous awareness raising, advocacy, and related educational activities will be ongoing and will serve to bring more leaders and their constituencies into the battle against AIDS. Zambia has pioneered one model, the District Task Force, as a means of planning, coordinating, and focusing activities at the district level. Other nations are taking similar approaches as they begin to develop a decentralized infrastructure of services and service delivery organizations.

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AIDS in the World II. Jonathan Mann et al. (Eds.). 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 1996.

The World Bank. *Confronting AIDS: Public Priorities in a Global Epidemic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

The World Bank. *Intensifying Action Against HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to a Development Crisis*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2000.

Internet Resources

The POLICY Project
<http://www.policyproject.com>

The FUTURES Group International
<http://www.tfgi.com>

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
<http://www.unaids.org>

The World Bank, AIDS and Economics
<http://www.worldbank.org/aids-econ>

International AIDS Economics Network
<http://www.iaen.org>

Health Economics and HIV/AIDS
Research Division
University of Natal
Durban, South Africa
<http://www.und.ac.za/und/heard>

The Synergy Project
<http://www.synergyaids.com>

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